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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Mildred.

C.B.B. Inv. et Sculp.

The Shadow

Mildred;

or,

The Wandering Spirit.

By

F. M B.

Illustrated by C. B. B.

London:

Addey and Co., 21, Old Bond Street.

(Late Cundall and Addey.)

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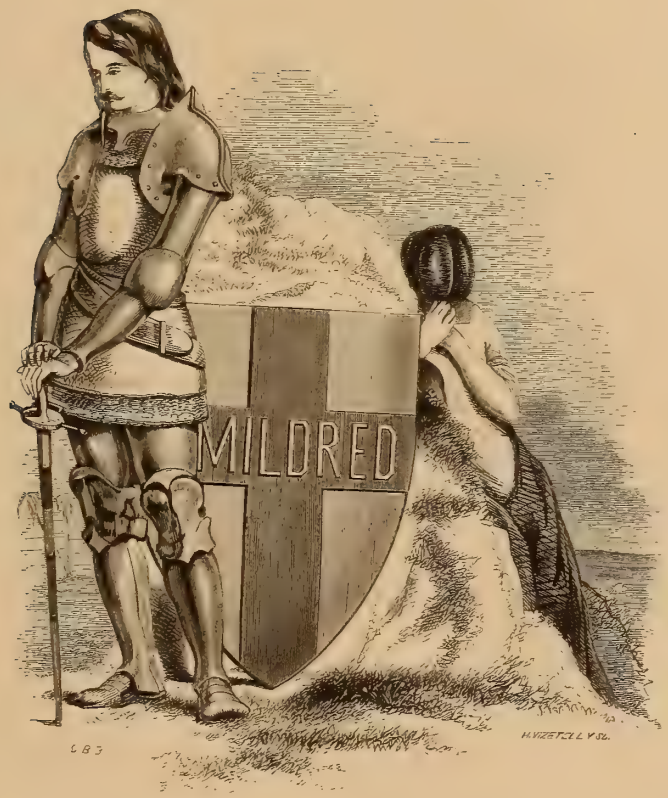
The idea of the following lines was suggested by a perusal of "Leonora;" but it is hoped that this acknowledgment will not provoke a comparison between "Mildred" and that beautiful poem.


MILDRED

Mildred.

Part the First.

i.

Fair Mildred sits in her halls of state,
While the night-breeze round is sighing,
Fair Mildred knows not the hour is late,
For her thoughts far hence are flying.

ii.

The lashes veil her blue eyes bright,
But not in sleep they are closing;
Ah! well I ween for them to-night
There shall be no soft reposing.

iii.

Fair Mildred's brow is clouded with care,
To her eye the tear is starting;
For her lover is called to a land afar,
And sadly she thinks of their parting.

iu.

Her mother seeks with anxious care
To soothe her loved daughter's sorrow:
"He comes not to-night, my Mildred fair,
Oh! rest thee, then, love, till the morrow."

u.

"No, mother dearest, he comes to-night!"
Fair Mildred answered, sighing;
"He comes to-night, and the morning's light
Far hence shall find him hieing.

Hereward's Entry

vi.

"He comes! even now his charger's feet
Are on the drawbridge sounding:
Oh, mother, his coming steps are fleet,
And my heart to their echo is bounding.

vii.

"But, mother, I scarce can draw my breath,
And my burthened heart seems breaking;
His absence will be like the sleep of death—
On earth there shall be no waking."

viii.

Now Hereward enters in armour dight,
Strange fire in his glance is burning,
From a distant land, from a deadly fight,
Perchance he will know no returning.

ix.

They quit the hall and the garish light
Of the pine-wood torches blazing;
All dimm'd and blurr'd is her mother's sight,
While after fair Mildred gazing.

x.

In silence the mossy knoll they tread,
All dark with the purple heather,
And on through the birchen copse have sped,
Where they oft have wandered together.

xi.

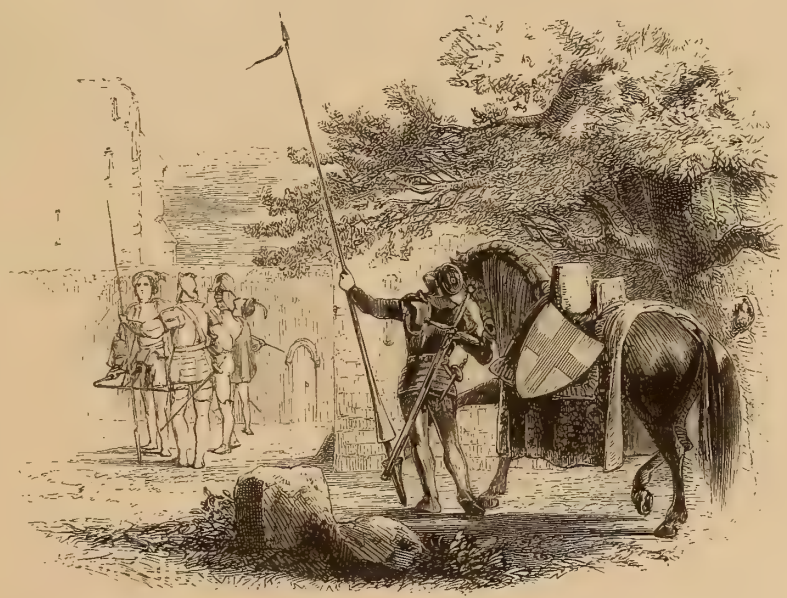
And now they stand 'neath the moon's pale beam,
Green boughs around them waving,
While at their feet a running stream
Its flower-gemm'd bank is laving.

xii.

He speaks at length, his voice is low,
Each word is with labour spoken,
Yet his accents fall distinct and slow,
By his deep grief unbroken.

xvi.

"And thou shalt join me in the spirit land;
Our sorrow then with joy shall be requited,
My shade shall guide thee on with outstretched hand:
We part in life, in death to be united!"



Part the Second.

i.

Summer wears slowly on—ah, woe!
No tidings to fair Mildred bringing;
Autumn and winter pass, and, lo!
The early flowers again are springing.

ii.

The ladye comes each eventide,
Soon as the sun in Heaven declineth,
And by the streamlet's mossy side
In musing sad and deep reclineth.

iii.

And now, alas! from day to day
Her cheek more lily white is fading,
As when the sun doth pass away,
And pales the sky in twilight shading.

iv.

Lo! from the grass below her feet
A snowdrop o'er the stream is stooping,
Fit emblem of that maiden sweet,
Who on the stream of Life is drooping.

v.

Yet turns she not to joys more pure,
She seeks not peace in prayer or fasting;
Such rest is sweet, such joys are sure,
And heavenly love, through death, is lasting.

vi.

'T is the same eve that, one year past,
Saw Hereward home and country leaving,
On the spot where she beheld him last,
Fair Mildred sits, all lonely grieving.

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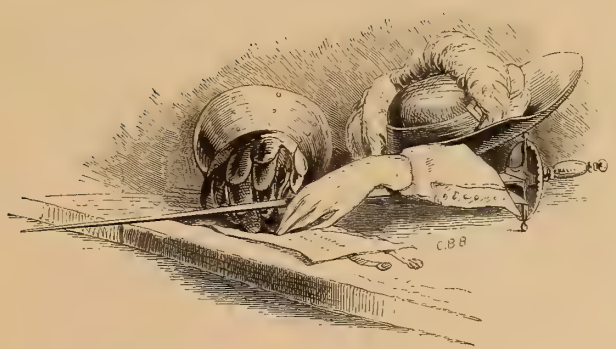
Retrospection.

vii.

Hush! the tear-drop is congealing!
Hark! that low despairing wail!—
Near her, upon her pathway stealing,
She sees a shadow wan and pale.

* * * * *



Part the Third.

i.

rom hill and vale the sunbeams fade,
The hamlet rests in the evening shade,
And closing is the day;
But ere the pall
Of night doth fall,
A spirit shall pass away.

ii.

Hist! what deep and solemn sound,
Awakes the slumb'ring echoes round?

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Mildred.

'Tis not the curfew bell;
'Tis the bell that tolls
For departing souls
A solemn passing knell.

iii.

Alas! alas! the lovely maid,
All wan and pale on her couch is laid,
And her mother near her weeps;

Her temples are damp with a clammy dew,
And her features o'erspread with a death-like hue,
In a fitful dream she sleeps.

iv.

A holy Friar kneels humbly there,
He murmurs a deep and earnest prayer
For the spirit so soon to part:
E'en at the last hour
Such prayers might have power
To move the impenitent heart.

v.

But she hears them not, though from slumber she wakes;
She heeds them not, for her soul forsakes

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Prospicience?

That pure and heavenly light:
In search of a shadow her spirit flies,
And she gazes with strained and eager eyes,
As though phantoms moved in her sight.

vi.

Her mother bends over her darling child,
She calls her with tears, and accents mild,
To seek for pardon and grace;
Fair Mildred turns, with a smile as of old,
Her loving mother once more to fold
In a long, a last embrace.

vii.

"I weep not thus to part from thee,"
Her mother cries; "for life is fleeting:

But, oh! in Heaven I hoped that we
Might have a happier, endless meeting.

viii.

"Oh! when upon thine infant brow
I pressed my lips at life's first dawning,
And wept for joy, I thought not how
Clouds oft o'ercast the fairest morning."

ix.

"And now, belov'd, it wrings my heart,
In life's young bloom to see thee perish—
Must I from thee, my own one, part—
Dare I no future hope to cherish?"

x.

"Weep not for me, O mother dear;
For, though I grieve from thee to sever,
I might not, would not, tarry here—
I go to join my love for ever.

xi.

"Gladly I hail the approach of death;
With joy I feel his icy finger;
Slowly I draw each falt'ring breath—
'T is Bereward calls, I may not linger.

xii.

" Pale shadows round my couch now flit,
In endless space I see them gliding ;
Oh ! haste thee, love, this earth to quit,
I watch, I wait, but for thy guiding.

xiii.

"I come, I come ! stretch forth thy hand—
I come to join thee, love, for ever ;
Together we'll range the spirit land—
We meet to part—never, oh, never !"

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Death!

xiv.

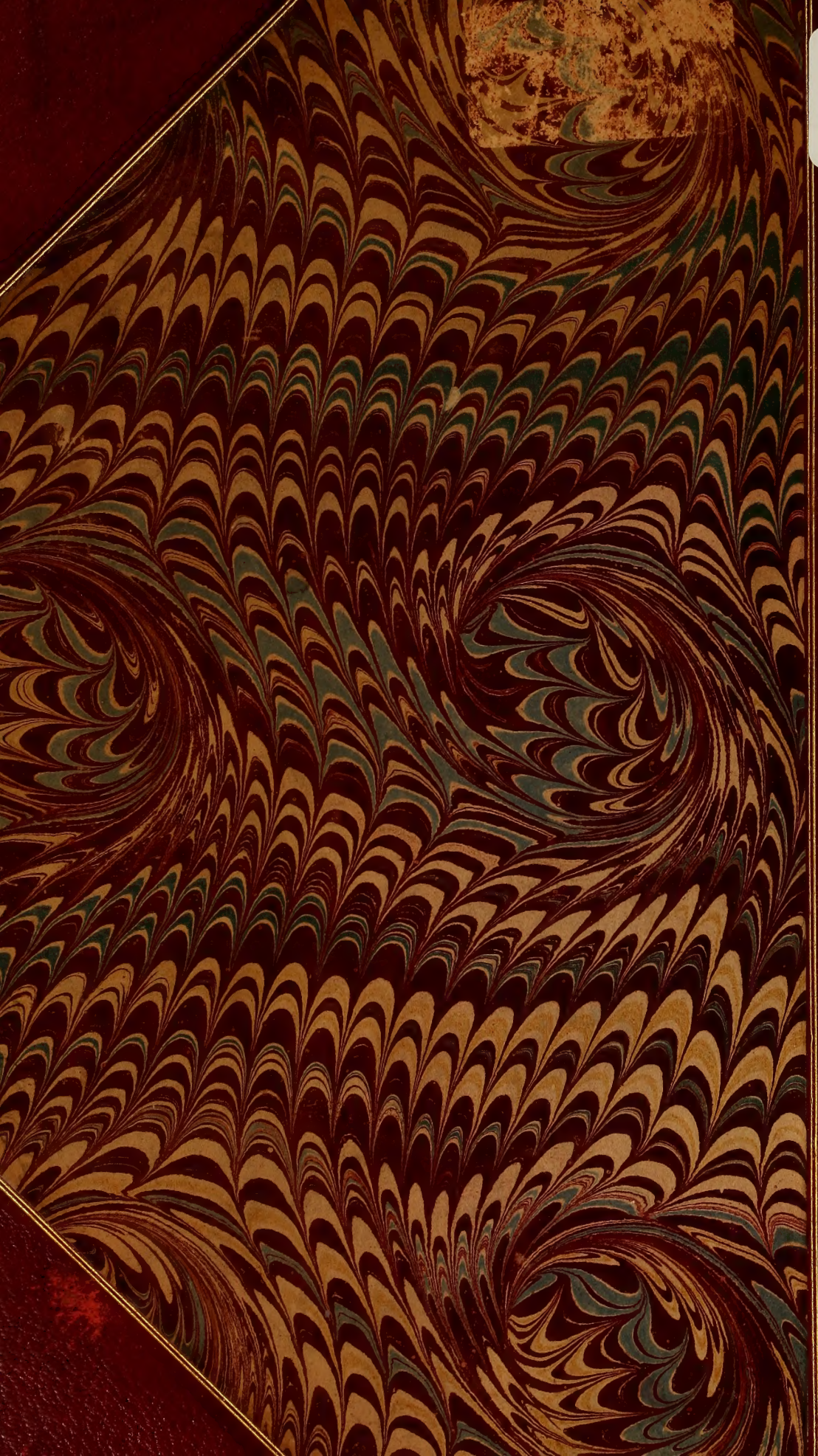
The smile from her lips has faded:
The light on her brow is shaded.
"He comes not," she cries;
"Each dark shadow flies—
They pass—they are gone—
Shall I wander alone,
A spirit lost,
'Mid yon shadowy host!
Great Heaven! and have I exchanged for this
All hope of peace and future bliss!"

xv.

She clasps her hands in mute despair;
'Tis all too late for pardon or prayer:
Backward she sinks with glazing eye,
Unshrouded and unblest to die.

xvi.

In holy ground they bury her not,
She lies in a lone, secluded spot;
The briar-rose in wild wreaths blows,
And the willow weeps where her ashes repose.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